

# *Prayer Devotions*



## **September 2020**

**Luke 18:1**

**Pray Always and Never Give Up**

## ***Prayer for Persecuted Church***

### **Pray for those in the midst of persecution**

*Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Hebrews 13:3*

Global watchdog Open Doors reports that 322 Christians are killed every month for their faith while millions more suffer persecution on a routine basis.

Please pray that these believers will not only stay committed to the call of Christ but also will respond in love to the evil shown by their aggressors. God's love will open doors for these believers to share the Gospel even more.

This Month's Countries, these are some of the most dangerous countries to follow Jesus:

Syria

Nigeria

Saudi Arabia

**Daily prayers for September...** “Our vision is so limited we can hardly imagine a love that does not show itself in protection from suffering.... The love of God did not protect His own Son.... He will not necessarily protect us – not from anything it takes to make us like His Son. A lot of hammering and chiseling and purifying by fire will have to go into the process.” ~ Elisabeth Elliot

**Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>:** There’s a truly powerful, easily implemented, yet oftentimes overlooked ministry that anyone can be a part of – it’s called being an encourager. We are told in James about the power of the tongue. Our words have the capacity to both bless and to tear down, and so often we let them fly from our lips without giving a thought to the effect they may have on their recipient. Think about a time when you have been discouraged or fearful and someone gave you words of affirmation that lifted your spirit. Conversely, you might also remember words that caused you to doubt yourself or to become disheartened, and these feelings can have a lingering effect that impacts how you view not only yourself but the world around you. Knowing we have this incredible power to bless and inspire others with just a few heartfelt words of encouragement, it should be our goal each day to find at least one person to bless. You never know the impact it might have, and who knows – it may be a case of casting bread on the water and seeing it come back to you at a time when you sorely need it!

**Ecclesiastes 11:1; Proverb 12:18, 25; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11**

**Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>**: We can become paralyzed when “what if” dominates our thoughts, and this can have a dramatic and detrimental effect on our prayer life. My daughter once shared with me the compelling phrase: what if = fear; even if = faith. We need to understand that God is for us, will never leave or forsake us, and is going to cause all of our circumstances to work together for our good when we are called according to His purpose. There are some powerful examples in the Bible of how He did exceeding abundantly for those who were willing to submit to the “even if” in the midst of their trial. For Queen Esther it was, “If I perish, I perish.” For Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego it was, “...even if God does not save us from the furnace...” And For Jesus it was, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, yet not as I will but as You will.” Think of the potential impact of their decisions had they decided to follow their fear rather than their faith. Of course for Jesus it was not fear but rather the realization that obedience would mean pain, but He knew that His Father loved Him, had a plan for the benefit of all of us, and there would be victory on the other side of the agony. Is there anything you are dealing with that seems impossible or beyond your ability to withstand? Remember how much God loves you and be willing to pray, “Lord, even if this doesn’t turn out the way I would choose, I trust You and believe that whatever You do will be for my ultimate good and in the best interest of those I love.”  
**Psalm 23:4-6; Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 4:6-7, 19**

**Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>**: One of the dangers of having our schedules disrupted and having a lot of time on our hands is the temptation to just mindlessly fill the time. Times of rest are not only needed, they are commanded, but it's what we do during those times of rest that can derail us. I'm sure there have been numerous hours spent by many of us watching TV or Netflix, and honestly how much of that enriches your spiritual life? What we're feeding our brains can be a much more serious virus than Covid-19. A virus cannot survive without a host, but once it has attached itself to the host it will take control of the part to which it has attached. A virus only exists to reproduce. This is why it's so imperative that we take every thought captive. You've heard the expression that the idle mind is the devil's playground – he never likes to play alone. Given permission and opportunity, one idle thought can morph into his well crafted scenario designed to bring you down. We need to develop the practice of examining thoughts the instant they enter our minds. Where did that come from? Does it serve to edify and encourage or steal and destroy? Once you've done that you'll know exactly what to do with the thought; the enemy can only make suggestions, we're responsible for what we do with them. That means we fill the "playground" with thoughts that honor God and will build up and encourage others as well as ourselves. Demolish the enemy's lies against God's truth and clean house.

**Psalm 1; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Philippians 4:8**

**Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>**: It's interesting that right after Jesus had so powerfully impacted those in the synagogue with His teaching and had revealed to them that the words of Isaiah had been fulfilled in their hearing, they began to question the veracity of what He had spoken because they saw Him just as Joseph's son. So often the supposed "wisdom" of the world can hinder us from accepting and being transformed by the wisdom from above because of the messenger. What we need to remember is that the messenger is just that – one who *carries* the message. What is truly important is where the message originated. We have a tendency to place greater credence in what we hear if the one speaking has a title or letters after their name like PhD. And that very well may give them authority in some areas, but it doesn't make them an authority in everything, and it doesn't even mean they're infallible in their own area of expertise. If someone corrects us or advises us and what they say lines up with the Word of God, it doesn't really matter who said it. God may choose to discipline or lead me through the words of someone much younger, much less educated, or maybe even someone with whom I have a real problem! But if what they say is sound, God forbid I should dismiss it because I see that person as "*just*" anything. We must be humbly open to the message, however and by whomever it is delivered.

**1 Corinthians 1:25-31; Proverb 15:21**

**Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup>**: Colossians 2:13, 14 (Contemporary English Version) “You were dead, because you were sinful and were not God's people. But God let Christ make you alive, when He forgave all our sins. God wiped out the charges that were against us for disobeying the Law of Moses [no one can perfectly keep His law. Every person on the planet is guilty.]. He took them away and nailed them to the cross.”

It's rainy season in South Korea now. We're talking 87% humidity. Not really a good time to move, but my friend and her husband and two children had to do just that. She was so thankful that they were able to load and drive to their new place in between the storms, but she said that because of the work of packing and loading, she took 3 showers that day! We have the luxury that when we feel sweaty or dirty, we can run to the bathroom and hop in the shower. What a great feeling that is to step out clean!

Do you realize that your soul needs that cleansing too? Our legal status with God has changed forever since Jesus gave His body and blood for us at the cross. Our debt is paid, but we still sin. And every time we sin, our friendship with the Lord is compromised. We are rejecting the Holy Spirit and His power for living as Jesus lived and for enjoying His presence. Let's run to the cross in the same way we'd run to take a shower. Let's agree with Him about whatever it is that we've gone our way instead of His. Let's stop ignoring Him when He's prompting us to do something. Let's make things right with anyone we have wronged.

“Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and He will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah.” Acts 3:19, 20 (New Living Translation)

**Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>**: Anchor us in deep Lord, in your Word so we may not be moved, even in the storms of life. May we be anchored in You Lord, our rock eternal. Even in the stormy waters may we be beacons of light and hope pointing others to you. Just like a light house, may we shine bright in the storm and be so grounded in God's Word that we continue to be a light no matter what the “weather” is around us. May we shine with Your light for all to see. 2 Chronicles 20:6 proclaims, “Power and might are in His hand and no one can withstand Him.” This is who we are anchored to!

**Joshua 1:8, Hebrews 12:29**

**Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup>**: Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. It's not against those whose appearance or belief is different than our own, it's not against a virus, and it's not against a political party. Our struggle is against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly realms! Satan wants to destroy anything that poses a threat to his dominion over earthly flesh and he does this through distraction, deception, and division. His first strategy is to distract us from pursuing God with our whole hearts, so he causes us to question the purity and relevance of God's word and how it applies to our personal lives. Did God *really* say? That puts us on shaky ground, and what's more, it reveals so many areas of uncommon ground with others. This causes division, and the greater the separation, the greater the chaos. How can we ever expect to come and reason together when we are adamantly defending our own personal agendas rather than God's? When we get caught up in the madness around us we are drawn away from the truth that can save us. Just remember that the enemy's ultimate goal is destruction, starting with the lives and testimonies of individual believers and extending to families, the church, and any system of government that still supports Godly values. We need to get back to the basics of first knowing God and His Word and then genuinely building our lives on that sure foundation. When that is established the rest will naturally fall into place.  
**Isaiah 1:16-18; Ephesians 6:12; Philippians 3:18-4:1; 1 Peter 5: 8-12**

**Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>:** We've all heard the axiom to never put off until tomorrow what you can do today. There's a movie line, in fact, that says "tomorrow" is a dangerous word – it's just code for never. In trying times such as we have been experiencing for the past seven months it can be easy to justify "putting off" our acts of service, but that's really a copout for not exploring creative ways to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We most definitely need to sit at His feet to determine what that might be, but it cannot end there. In fact the Bible has some rather harsh warnings for those who would choose to procrastinate. In Proverbs we're told that one who is slack in his work is brother to him who is a destroyer. In other words, being lazy or remiss in doing the work, our work, which needs to be done is just as bad as the prodigal who wasted his inheritance in empty pursuits to please his own appetite without considering how it grieved his father. We grieve our Father in such neglect and apathy because we're not valuing our inheritance. We're taking for granted His grace and being presumptuous with His blessing. We need to live each day with purpose, asking Him what great adventure or undertaking He has in mind for us, even if it's as simple as spending an hour in prayer for a specific need. One of my all time favorite verses in the Bible is Ephesians 2:10 which reminds us that not only are we His masterpiece, but He has created us for good works which He prepared beforehand for us to walk in. So what are we waiting for? Begin each day with a prayer that He would show you those good works.

**Proverb 18:9; John 9:4; Ephesians 5:15-17**

**Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>**: It would be easy to become so focused on what's going on in our own country that we forget that God also is interested in the rest of His creation and His desire is for us to pray for the nations. And we are not at a loss for things to pray for other parts of the world: the devastating aftermath of the explosion in Beirut; devastating storms in Iowa; the persecution of Christians in North Korea, Iran, India etc; countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Pakistan where Christianity is illegal; countries with extreme poverty such as India, Nigeria or the Congo. Perhaps you know someone personally from one of these or maybe you have heard or read a story that would stir you to pray for them. If not, do some research or simply ask God to place one or more nations on your heart and commit to pray for them for at least the next seven days. Pray for their obvious needs (poverty, persecution, etc.) and then also pray that God would protect, empower and anoint the Christians in that country in living and speaking His truth; pray for a wave of revival and a bountiful harvest to sweep the country; pray for God to open your heart and reveal specific ways that He wants you to intercede for them. When we do this, we know we are praying His heart and we can be encouraged that we are being missions minded and playing a part in the Great Commission. May God continue to impress upon those who are called by His name to remember their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world as they call on His name.

**Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9**

**Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>:** I enjoy cooking with fresh herbs and I am blessed to have a *really* healthy basil plant, but keeping it that way requires constant vigilance and attention. The plant produces bolts in the hot weather, which means it begins to go to seed. As a result the leaves will become bitter and all the plant's vigor will be directed to producing flowers and seeds unless these bolts are pinched off on a daily basis and the plant receives adequate and consistent watering. This reminded me of what can happen to us when our environment starts getting hotter. We can begin to shut down, putting all of our focus on the future without putting our energies into producing what is beneficial for the present – our primary purpose for the here and now. And the result of that may be that what was meant to enhance the message we bear instead becomes bitter. That is if we aren't mindful to regularly eliminate those things that would minimize, taint or bring to a halt what our lives are meant to produce and then keep the ground well watered with His Word through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Let's be vigilant in keeping our lives full of zest and efficacy by yielding to the pruning of our Master Gardener and drinking deeply and often. **Psalm 1:1-3; Isaiah 58:11; John 7:37-39**

**Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>:** “What the world needs now, is love, sweet love...” so goes the song. How true, especially today! So where does this sweet love come from? Our wicked hearts can't produce the kind of love that meets another's soul's deepest longing; only God can do that. Have you ever spent some time reflecting on the love of the Lord? If we've grown up going to church, we may have heard about how God loves us so much, that He sent His Son to die for us, so that our wrongdoings are paid for and we can have a relationship with a Holy God. But have you ever considered that Jesus was fully God, fully man—without sin, and voluntarily laying down His life meant He would have to experience the horrific ugliness that is sin? On that cross, His sinless humanity, as well as His perfect divinity, felt the weight of the world's sin—yours and mine. Read what the Almighty God says in the Old Testament book of Hosea - 14: 4: “I will heal their apostasy [check this word out in the dictionary!]. I will love them freely.” The Hebrew word for love means to have affection for—it conveys God's love for people and the same verb includes loving peace, truth, and tasty food! Our perfect God loves us perfectly. Reflect on that and rejoice! Spend time with the One who loves you best and you'll be able to pass that love on to the world.

**Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**: We hear so much about having “much-needed” conversations. Did we just now wake up to the fact that they are needed? And honestly, unless the conversations lead to convictions and actions, they are merely spinning wheels and wasting breath in order to appease our consciences. The idea of having a conversation for the sake of having a conversation reminds me of what the apostle Paul encountered in Athens where the people would spend their time merely listening to new ideas without being changed by what they heard. Dialogue needs to lead to decisions. James puts it quite succinctly when he states that faith without works is dead. We are surrounded by those who are hurting and in need either because of repercussions of the virus or by virtue of the color of their skin, and if we are going to love *them* the way Jesus loves *us*, that means we love even when they don't love us back. Maybe even when they question our motives or hurl insults at us. We cannot settle for being onlookers. We need to be willing to be found in the fight. As a controversial yet passionate Christian doctor put it, we need to be warriors; we need to be snipers in the kingdom of God who are on the front lines battling the enemy – the real enemy. Words are cheap. Let's put some conviction behind our conversation. The time is now.

**James 2:14-17, 4:17; 1 John 3:13-18**

**Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>**: It's a classic theme in literature – good versus evil. We have an innate desire to see an intense battle in which good ultimately triumphs, and part of the reason for that is because it's a story that began when ours did, in the Garden of Eden. We have an arch villain who is sinister and Machiavellian with a full arsenal and a host of minions to do his bidding. But we also have a champion who may appear at times to be oblivious to the enemy's wiles but we are assured will come to our defense. In fact when the odds appear to be impossibly stacked against the side of good and the situation becomes seemingly hopeless, this is when we cheer the loudest at the miraculous triumph against the evil. It's Luke Skywalker finally closing his eyes and giving over control to “the force.” We have a very powerful force living inside of us as well, and it behooves us to remember that and to give Him control. This is how we fight our battles – it may look like we're surrounded, but we're surrounded by Him. When we surrender to His guidance we can be assured of ultimate and glorious victory. **Romans 8:31, 16:19; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Deuteronomy 3:22**

**Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>**: Bringing Christ with us into the world - It is so amazing to be able to spend time listening to worship music, reading God's Word and speaking to Him in prayer. Especially if we're able to do this on a regular, consistent basis. To just quiet my spirit and melt into God's presence is such a blessing. There's no other feeling that compares to it! There comes a time, though, when we need to step away from this time and take care of the business of living. I have to admit that even though my heart and spirit are feeling such love and peace, I sometimes leave those feelings behind and feel resentful that I have to leave at all. I pray that we can truly be salt and light to the world around us, that we are able to bring the love and peace we feel in our private time with God out of the prayer closet and into the world around us. As you end your special time with God today (and everyday), ask the Holy Spirit to minister to your heart a loving and peaceful spirit that defies human understanding and is able to show love and patience to everyone we see that day. Here are some encouraging scriptures that may help:

**Colossians 3:12-17, Matthew 5: 13-16, Philipians 4:4-9, Proverbs 3:3-4, Ephesians 4:2**

**Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>**: If you find yourself in the mindset of asking, "When will we get back to normal?" consider looking at this season as a journey, and rather than asking, "Are we there yet?" start doing what you would before going on a trip. One thing we always do is wash the car and make sure we have clean clothes to pack. Let's make every effort, like the disciples did, to be spotless and to align our hearts with Him more than ever before. Wash up and then remind yourself to stay out of the mud. Make sure you're keeping your tank full. You'll never reach your desired destination on an empty tank, so get a refill every day, and remember –with the Holy Spirit you get unlimited free refills. And take personal responsibility to be accountable of your spiritual health and how you're feeding it. Don't blame the cook if you're fat or unhealthy! Accept what you can do and what you can't. You can't control the weather when you travel, but you do have control over what you pack to be prepared for any eventuality. Be diligent about what you can do...like praying. Then start eagerly anticipating what awaits you when the journey is culminated. And remember, He has each of us on this journey at this specific time for a reason. Make the most of it, depending fully on Him to be our navigator.

**Isaiah 55:2-3; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 2:2**

**Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>**: This week's creative prayer strategy is to pray for unity. Its importance and need are spoken of often in the Bible, so it stands to reason that it should also be important to us. There are so many things that threaten unity within the body of Christ: pride; judgmental attitudes; selfishness; lack of knowledge, understanding, or empathy. If ever there was a time when His creation is crying for and in desperate need of a united army of His servants standing together as one to battle the schemes of the enemy that time is now. Scripture tells us that a house divided against itself cannot stand, but the power of trained soldiers falling in line under the command of a trustworthy and powerful leader is immeasurable. Pray that we as a body would be such warriors for Him, and ask Him to reveal any areas in which you may be causing disharmony so that you can repent and move forward in greater power. As Dan often reminds us, we're so much better together.

**Mark 3:25; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Colossians 3:12-15**

**Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>**: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever." (Psalm 107:1) "I am watching over you. My plans for you are to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11) I can take any unwanted circumstance and turn it around for your good. I am in the fire with you and when you come out of the furnace of affliction, you will not even smell like smoke. My goodness will not fail you. I will set you upon a solid rock and chase your enemies until you see the victory. I am your deliverer. The enemy is a liar and is defeated by the blood of Jesus. Remember: It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. The Lord tells us not to give up hope in Psalm 27:13. "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." The Lord says to you, His child, to meditate on His goodness until you see the manifestation of your desire. How? His instruction in Psalm 145:5-7, "I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness." Thank You, Father, for reminding us of Your goodness. In Jesus name, amen.

**Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>**: We live in an age of substitutions. I understand the need for sugar a substitute for diabetics, but oftentimes the reason we look for alternatives to the “real” thing is because we want all the pleasure without any of the possible negative side effects. We want to indulge in sweets and fats but we also want to be slim. The bottom line is we don’t want to have to exercise the discipline of increased aerobic activities, self denial or even moderation. We look for “get rich quick” schemes to circumvent hard work and perseverance. It’s no wonder this mentality has spilled over into Christianity where we want to become spiritual giants in five easy steps. We substitute weekend conferences for disciplined daily reading of the Word and application of what it reveals. We pursue happiness more than we pursue holiness, gratification more than His glory, programs replace seeking His Presence. We have more divas than disciples. The only fast track to maturity is through effort and enduring, sharing the trials that Jesus and the apostles bore for the sake of glorifying God. There is no substitute for sitting at His feet and learning obedience, even when it’s inconvenient and may cost us what we mistakenly perceive as success or gratification. The true rewards may not even be realized this side of Heaven, but oh the glory that will then be revealed! A very poor analogy (substitute) is the satisfaction of getting on the scale after months of limiting the intake of those things that would derail you from achieving your goals and seeing a number that’s even lower than you could have imagined. Well done, good and faithful one. Lord, may we never be satisfied by cheap imitations. Everything You have created is good, but You desire for us to learn to also exercise self control and the concept of all things in moderation. May we never settle for anything less than what You have deemed to be right and good.

**2 Peter 1:3-11; Titus 2:1-8**

**Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>**: We are so blessed to have pastors who not only teach us about the Holy Spirit but who also are intimately acquainted with and dependent upon Him. We all desperately need Him because it is impossible to live a supernatural life on natural power, but that is what so many Christians are trying to do. In John 16 Jesus let His disciples in on a secret – He was going away, but it was actually a good thing because He was going to send them a Helper who would feed them and lead them. They would be fed the true word and they would be led into all truth! This gives us as believers a huge advantage in dealing with life, but we have to take advantage of our advantage. We need to walk directly into this relationship, not away from it. Some people are so afraid of getting “too filled” with the Spirit. He is called by Francis Chan the forgotten God, partly because many don’t really know Him and because of misrepresentation of what it truly means to be filled. The church sorely needs a renewed desire to get to know this Helper up close and personal. Can there honestly be such a thing as too much truth? Have you ever heard of anyone being offended because when someone got miraculously healed they thought it was just too much? God designed us to be walking in that kind of power to His glory. Creator God declared “Let there be light.” The Saviour Jesus proclaimed, “I am the Light.” The Holy Spirit is that member of the Trinity who guides us into the identity of walking in the transforming power of that light. Our responsibility is to do the work that He has empowered us to do.

**John 16:7-14; Acts 1:5-8; Ephesians 3:14-21**

**Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>:** How can you find joy when the world seems to be so broken and out of control? For those who know Jesus Christ, joy is not found in the "things" the world has to offer. Real joy is in knowing Jesus. Joy is found by seeking fellowship with the Lord. Joy is released when we sit at the feet of Jesus and adore Him for who He is and not what He can do for us. Joy is found in the presence of the Lord. (Psalm 16:11). Hear what the Spirit is saying to you. My love for you can fill the empty places in your heart. Here, in My presence you can experience a satisfaction deep in your heart. I will comfort and bring healing to your soul as you seek My presence. I see the hurt in your heart. In My presence your burdens will lift and your cares will become small and insignificant. My child, take in the beauty and peace of My presence and be renewed and refreshed. Let My love for you touch your heart in My presence. You are my child and I long to embrace you with My unending love, goodness and mercy. In My presence you can experience a level of peace unknown to the world. Come, enter into My presence and be filled with joy and refreshing in your spirit.

**Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>:** Many presume that when they become believers life is going to be a walk in the park. And that is true. There will be times of splendor when you feel like He's walking with you through Canada's glorious Banff Park, and then there will be times when it feels more like Central Park at midnight or maybe even Jurassic Park, but the assurance is He will still be beside you to protect you, guide you, and ensure you get through it in victory. Difficult and challenging times are a given, even for a Christian. In fact we are told in John 16:33 that in this world we *will have* trouble, but then Jesus reassures us that we can take heart because He has overcome the world! And He's more invincible than Iron Man, He never goes on vacation, and He absolutely loves you. No matter which park you happen to be navigating at the moment, be encouraged that He has lessons and blessings to be gleaned from all of them. Don't miss them, and don't fret or fear. You have the most absolutely trustworthy and compassionate guide to guarantee you will not be abandoned or destroyed. **Deuteronomy 31:6; Psalm 23 & 91**

**Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>:** There are times when I question the depth or even authenticity of my love for God, and this triggers insecurity and shame which initiates a downward spiral. And then I heard something that really got me back on track. The first thing was a reminder that love is both a choice and a command. There are times when I may not *feel* especially warm and fuzzy with one of my children, but because of my relationship with them I know that I still love them. It's a choice, but it's also a command. Through Moses the Lord spoke to the Israelite the command to love Him and obey Him. This was reiterated by Jesus when He told a lawyer who questioned Him as to which was the greatest commandment. The second revelation for me was that love can leak. What that means is that Satan can shoot fiery darts at my heart to cause me to begin to question God's love for me or my own devotion to Him. How could you say you love God and do *that*?! If God *really* loved you, He would never have allowed you to go through this. This is when I need to go back to point one – I can choose to believe what God has revealed to me through His Word, and I can choose to be obedient to His command even when the feelings may temporarily be out of sync. Finally, love needs to be expressed, and one of the best ways to demonstrate our love for God is to love others. When we do this it causes our love to grow and it counteracts and heals the effects of a leaking heart. Lord, thank You for Your great love for me and for giving me the capacity to choose to love You back and to communicate Your love to others.

**Deuteronomy 11:22; Matthew 22:37; John 14:21**

**Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>**: Maybe (hopefully) you already have a set time every day when you pray. It could be right before going to sleep or as soon as you wake up. But it is interesting when we read Scripture that there were times during the day that were designated times set apart for prayer. (Acts 3:1; Psalm 55:17) The encouragement is for us to try setting apart a specific time each day for prayer, possibly for a particular situation. If there is a Bible verse that corresponds and would translate into a time to pray, practice setting your alarm to that time as a reminder. In YWAM we used 10:02 (either a.m. or p.m.) and called it the Luke 10-2 virus to pray that laborers would be raised up and sent out into His harvest. A pastor used 4:31 p.m. to pray for his church to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 4:31) Maybe at 2:39 you could claim God's promise for unsaved loved ones that His desire is for none to be lost. (2 Peter 3:9) Choose a time you want to pray and a specific focus over which to pray. If it works for you that is corresponds to a specific Scripture – great. However, the important thing is to be intentional, and then set your alarm to remind you. This may be for a season, or it could become an integral part of your prayer life. Either way, it will definitely draw you nearer to the Father and just might be the catalyst to a deeper faith and some amazing breakthrough!

**Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>**: Living water - Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20.) My deepest desire is to be in a loving and intimate fellowship with My sons and daughters. I have placed within each person a desire to know their creator. I hear you when you cry out from the very depths of your being. I want to fill the longing soul. I am only a whisper away. The longing of your heart can only be fulfilled by seeking My presence. Your soul longs for Me as the deer pants for the water brooks. Seek Me early when the day is new. My mercy is new every morning. I will show you the path of life: in My presence is fullness of joy; at my right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16:11). In My presence there is a peace that transcends the cares of this world. I call you to come to the deep waters. Do you hear the still small voice? Come and share together the living water of life and let the longing of your soul be satisfied.

**Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**: With school looking so much different, and being a former teacher, I'm painfully aware of the frustration teachers must be feeling. Remote learning is challenging for everyone involved, but there's no true substitute for hands-on, face-to-face learning. There are some things that are better learned with personal interaction and accountability. Learners are more motivated to engage when they're in close physical proximity with the teacher. There can be an observable commitment to mastering a concept if for no other reason than to impress fellow classmates and the instructor. But it's also easier for the teacher to express their personal enthusiasm and impress the importance of learning as opposed to regurgitating facts to earn a grade. True teachers want to make a connection with their students to instill a hunger for learning. The same is true of another Teacher. We need to make a commitment to become God-learners. We need to put as much effort into getting to know Him as we do the candidates for office, and to monitor where He's going as much as we do the weather or the stock market. Reading the Bible shouldn't be approached as fulfilling an assignment but rather as learning how to successfully navigate through life and to become intimately acquainted with our sovereign Lord, loving Father, and omniscient Creator. **Proverb 3:1-2, 18:15; Luke 6:40; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrew 4:12**

**Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>**: How often have you heard others say, or perhaps you yourself have said, "Well, we're (I'm) only human!" to somehow excuse our failures to live up to what we know is right and moral? If you are a follower of Christ, that is a lie. We have been given a precious gift and identity that transcends our mortal bodies, and we can tap into the supernatural power that gives us to overcome any obstacle to obedient living that may come our way. Jesus didn't give His life just so we could cope with our fears and trials but rather that we could become victorious overcomers! We need to not only acknowledge what that means but walk it out with conviction and authority. Make it a habit whenever you find yourself in a compromising or difficult situation in which you have a choice to make to begin to declare not what the world (flesh) would say you are, but declare who God says you are. You are the righteousness of Christ, more than a conqueror, a new creature, an adopted heir of God, chosen, a royal priesthood for His purpose. Keep reminding yourself that through Him we have the power to overwhelmingly conquer. Greater is He! Praise God. **John 14:12; Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 10:3-6; Ephesians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 4:4, 5:4-5**

**Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>**: I'm frequently drawn back to the significance of the name of our church – Pure Heart. As representatives first of Jesus Christ and second this body of believers in which we have been placed, we need to constantly be examining the condition of our hearts. Are we content? Trusting? Confused? Resentful? Bitter? My sister-in-law used to tell her girls when they were young and acting up to go to their room until they had a happy heart. We would all do well to follow such advice. In the second book of Chronicles we read, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him." The original Hebrew word translated perfect is *shalem* and it means blameless or completely submitted. This is what God is looking for – not perfect people (there aren't any besides Jesus) but those whose hearts are submitted to Him. And this needs to be what we desire because until we want what *God* wants more than what *we* want we can never be truly happy. A friend used to say, "When what pleases you is to please the Lord, you're free to do as you please." God isn't impressed with what we do; He is pleased when what we do is motivated by our love for Him and a desire to do what blesses and glorifies Him. That's what reveals the condition of our hearts.

**2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 24:3-4, 51:10; Philippians 1:9-10**

**Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**: One of the gifts that God gives to all of us, Christian and non-Christian alike, is time. It is both one of our most precious and most squandered gifts. I recently witnessed a good friend going through the final days of his life, and after being a very vocal agnostic for the previous decades he finally accepted that Jesus is in fact who He claims to be. That is truly remarkable and cause for rejoicing, but how heartrending to consider what his life might have been had he not wasted those years chasing after things that could never really satisfy and had no eternal value. We will all face those final moments, and then we will stand before the Lord to give an account of how we used the time He gave us. I think all of us would like to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." We can't control our future, but we can control how we choose to spend our time today. To quote David Jeremiah, "You may not be able to predict the time of a tornado, earthquake or the Lord's return. But you can know for a fact that He is coming back. Work today to share the escape route of God's grace with others, before the night cometh."

**Psalm 90:12; Matthew 25:23; Romans 14:12; Ephesians 5:15-16; James 4:14**

**Tuesday, September 29<sup>nd</sup>**: Mercy - God is a God of mercy. God is gentle, tender, kind and full of mercy. God longs to show his mercy. What stands in the way of receiving His great mercy is the sin of pride. "For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away His face from you, if you return to Him." (2 Chronicles 30:9b ESV) "For all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God." (Romans 3:23) But know this: The Lord's mercy is new every morning. He longs to show mercy to all who call upon Him. "Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and He exalts Himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him" (Isaiah 30:18 ESV). There is nothing too difficult for God. God longs to show mercy. He told us plainly in Hebrews 4:16 ESV : "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

**Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>**: If you've seen the movie *The War Room*, perhaps like me you were inspired to designate a particular place to pray. Since our children are all grown, I was fortunate enough to have an entire room that could be set apart for this purpose. But it doesn't have to be an entire room; in fact, it doesn't even need to be indoors. The underlying principle is that there can be power in having a designated place where you regularly meet with God – someplace convenient where you won't get distracted or interrupted and where you can be comfortable. It may help to have worship music playing, but only if it won't become a distraction. You are the one who will know what will be the best atmosphere for you. If you feel like you would benefit from something to set a tone, try logging in to the International House of Prayer's website where they live stream from their prayer room 24/7. ([www.ihopkc.org/prayerroom](http://www.ihopkc.org/prayerroom)) Anytime you are struggling or just really need your alone time with Him it can be so comforting and energizing to know there is a special place you've set aside for just the two of you. **Matthew 6:5-6; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12, 11:1**